

His Day Is Done

Maya Angelou

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His Day Is Done



A NELSON MANDELA
TRIBUTE

Maya Angelou

*This poem was written
on behalf of the American people
on the occasion of the death of
Nelson Mandela on December 5, 2013,
at the request of the U.S. Department of State.*



(photo credit col2.1)

HIS DAY IS DONE

A Nelson Mandela Tribute

MAYA
ANGELOU



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*Education is the most powerful weapon you
can use to change the world.*

—NELSON MANDELA



(photo credit col3.1)

His day is done,

Is done.

The news came on the wings of a wind

Reluctant to carry its burden.

Nelson Mandela's day is done.

The news, expected and still unwelcome,
Reached us in the United States and suddenly

Our world became somber.

Our skies were leadened.

His day is done.



(photo credit 1.1)

We see you, South African people,
Standing speechless at the slamming
Of that final door
Through which no traveler returns.

Our spirits reach out to you:
Bantu, Zulu, Xhosa, Boer.

We think of you
And your Son of Africa,
Your Father,
Your One More Wonder of the World.



(photo credit 1.2)

We send our souls to you

As you reflect upon

Your David armed with

A mere stone facing down

The Mighty Goliath.

Your man of strength, Gideon,
Emerging triumphant
Although born into the brutal embrace of Apartheid,
Scarred by the savage atmosphere of racism,
Unjustly imprisoned
In the bloody maws of South African dungeons.



(photo credit 1.3)



(photo credit 1.4)

Would the man survive?

Could the man survive?

His answer strengthened men and women

Around the world.

In the Alamo in San Antonio, Texas,
On the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco,
In Chicago's Loop,
In New Orleans' Mardi Gras,
In New York City's Times Square,
We watched as the hope of Africa sprang
Through the prison's doors.



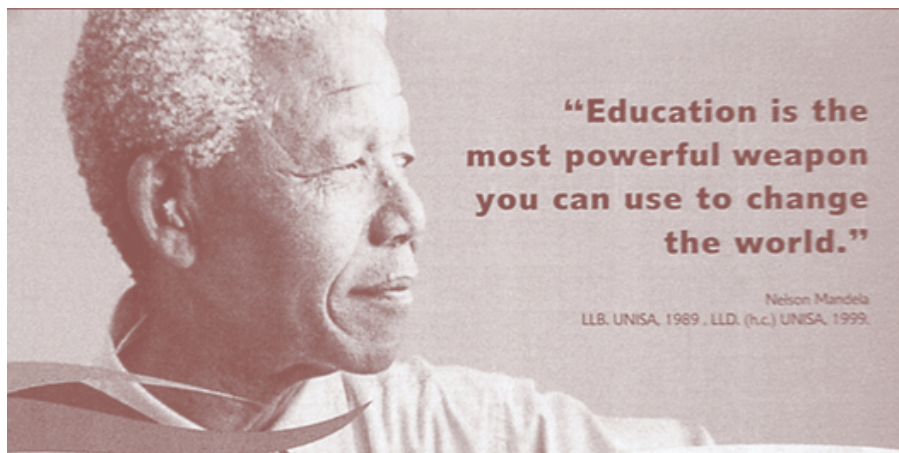
(photo credit 1.5)

His stupendous heart intact,

His gargantuan will

Hale and hearty.

He had not been crippled by brutes
Nor was his passion for the rights
Of human beings
Diminished by twenty-seven years of imprisonment.



(photo credit 1.6)



(photo credit 1.7)

Even here in America

We felt the cool

Refreshing breeze of freedom

When Nelson Mandela took

The seat of the presidency

In his country

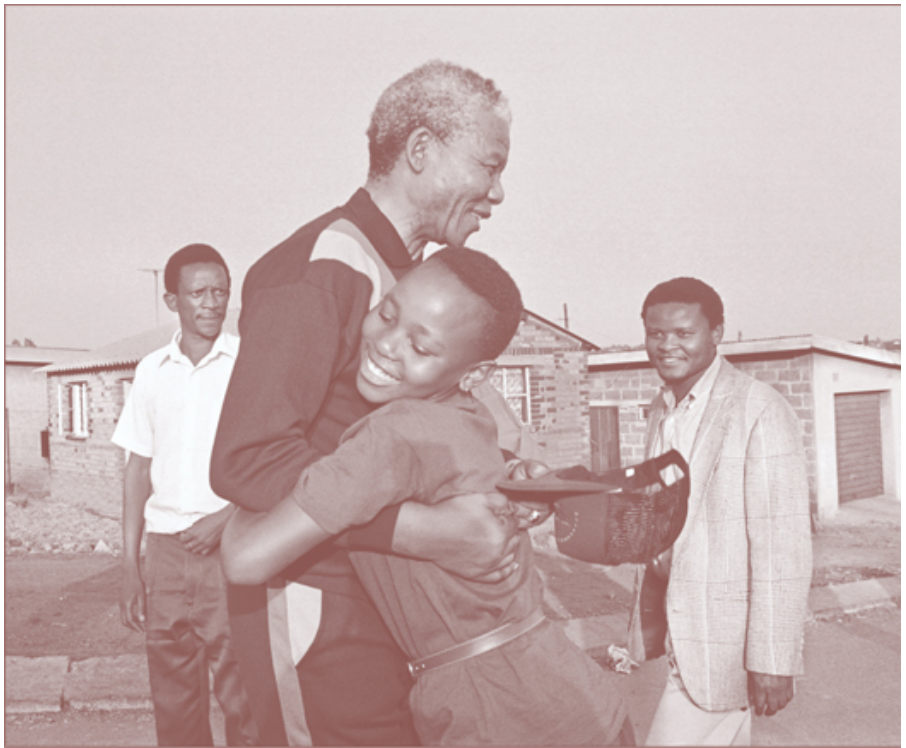
Where formerly he was not even allowed to vote.

We were enlarged by tears of pride
As we saw Nelson Mandela's
Former prison guards
Invited, courteously, by him to watch
From the front rows
His inauguration.



(photo credit 1.8)

We saw him accept
The world's award in Norway
With the grace and gratitude
Of Solon in Ancient Grecian courts
And the confidence of African Chiefs
From ancient royal stools.



(photo credit 1.9)

No sun outlasts its sunset

But will rise again

And bring the dawn.

Yes, Mandela's day is done,



(photo credit 1.10)

Yet we, his inheritors,

Will open the gates wider

For reconciliation.

And we will respond
Generously to the cries
Of the Blacks and Whites,
Asians, Hispanics,
The poor who live piteously
On the floor of our planet.



(photo credit 1.11)

He has offered us understanding.

We will not withhold forgiveness

Even from those who do not ask.

Nelson Mandela's day is done.

We confess it in tearful voices

Yet we lift our own to say:

Thank You.



(photo credit 1.12)



(photo credit 1.13)

Thank You, Our Gideon.

Thank You, Our David.

Our great courageous man.

We will not forget you.

We will not dishonor you.

We will remember and be glad

That you lived among us



(photo credit 1.14)

That you taught us

And

That you loved us

All!



(photo credit 1.15)

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*To all the world's citizens,
who lost a friend
when President Nelson Mandela died*

BY MAYA ANGELOU

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings
Gather Together in My Name
Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas
The Heart of a Woman
All God's Children Need Traveling Shoes
A Song Flung Up to Heaven
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I Shall Not Be Moved
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A Brave and Startling Truth
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Celebrations
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CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Poetry for Young People
My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me
Kofi and His Magic

PICTURE BOOKS

Love's Exquisite Freedom
Now Sheba Sings the Song
Life Doesn't Frighten Me

COOKBOOKS

Great Food, All Day Long
Hallelujah! The Welcome Table

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Poet, writer, performer, teacher, and director MAYA ANGELOU was raised in Stamps, Arkansas, and then went to San Francisco. In addition to her bestselling autobiographies, beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, she has also written five poetry collections, including *I Shall Not Be Moved* and *Shaker, Why Don't You Sing?*, and two cookbooks, *Hallelujah! The Welcome Table* and *Great Food, All Day Long*, as well as the celebrated poem "On the Pulse of Morning," which she read at the inauguration of President William Jefferson Clinton, and "A Brave and Startling Truth," written at the request of the United Nations and read at its fiftieth anniversary. She lives in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.